United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/801
8 January 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General deplores expulsion of Palestinians from occupied territories, and calls on Israel to permit those deported to return home.

- Amendment Conference to partial test-ban Treaty begins general debate; speakers call for its conversion into comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

- Secretary-General appoints Giorgio Giacomelli of Italy to head United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

- Secretary-General appoints Ilter Turkmen as Commissioner-General of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

- President of General Assembly concludes visit to Palestine refugees in occupied territories and Jordan.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said today through his Spokesman that he was deeply concerned by the fact that Israel had carried out its decision to expel four Palestinians from the occupied territories. The Secretary-General strongly deplored this action which was in direct contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and called on the Israeli authorities to permit those who had been deported to return to their homes.

He said it should be recalled that this matter was addressed in Security Council resolution 681 (1990) on 20 December, by which the Council urged the Secretary-General to make new efforts to monitor the situation in the occupied territories.

The Secretary-General has previously expressed concern in a similar statement on 17 December, following the deportation of four Palestinians from the occupied territories. In that statement, he called on the Israeli authorities to respect the 1949 Geneva Convention (on the protection of civilians in time of war).

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For information media—not an official record

In a related development, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in a press release made available at Headquarters today, appealed for Israel to respect civilians in Israel and the occupied territories. It said the expulsions today by Israel brought to 66 the total number of persons expelled from the occupied territories since the beginning of the intifadah, and that the expulsions were taking place "in a climate of violence" fomented by the growing number of civilian victims since September 1990.

The Red Cross asked that everything possible be done to put an end to the spiral of violence and repression, and that the population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip be treated in accordance with the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention.

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The Amendment Conference of the State Parties to the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water -- also called the partial test-ban Treaty -- began its general debate today, with speakers calling for the Treaty's conversion into a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

The Treaty, which does not cover underground tests, was signed on 5 August 1963 by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, and entered into force on 10 October the same year. By 1 November 1990, there were 117 parties to the Treaty. Two nuclear-weapon States -- China and France -- are among those that have not acceded to it.

Citing the relationship between nuclear testing and the arms race, many speakers said a comprehensive ban was essential to ending the nuclear threat posed by the existence of nearly 50,000 weapons. They said such a ban would help ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as a first step towards their total elimination. Also, citing the end of the cold war and improved international relations, some said the time was ripe for the establishment of such a treaty.

Other speakers, however, said a comprehensive ban could not be viewed in isolation from the overall question of disarmament and arms control. They said the Conference on Disarmament was the appropriate international forum for negotiating a test ban. One speaker noted that a comprehensive test ban involved complex national security issues for countries that have long relied on nuclear deterrence for protection.

Yesterday, Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, who was elected President of the Conference, said the time was far overdue for renewed and determined action to realize the goal of "ending all nuclear tests, by all States, in all environments and for all time".

Also yesterday, in a message read by a representative of the Soviet Union, President Mikhail Gorbachev confirmed his country's willingness to stop

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nuclear tests at any time if the United States did the same. He also expressed Soviet readiness to amend the partial test-ban Treaty to a comprehensive ban, including underground tests.

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The Secretary-General has decided to appoint Giorgio Giacomelli of Italy to head the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. He will be succeeded as Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) by Ilter Turkmen of Turkey.

In resolution 45/179, the General Assembly welcomed the proposal of the Secretary-General to unify the United Nations structures for drug abuse control to enable the United Nations to strengthen its role as a main focus for concerted international actions on this matter. Accordingly, the functions of the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control will be integrated in the single new Programme.

Mr. Giacomelli will execute the integration process of the new Programme, which will have exclusive responsibility for co-ordinating and providing effective leadership for all United Nations drug-control activities.

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In a similar announcement, the Secretary-General, after having consulted with the members of the Advisory Commission for UNRWA, announced the appointment of Ilter Turkmen, a national of Turkey, as Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

Mr. Turkmen has been the Ambassador of Turkey to France since 1988. He was Turkey's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1985 to 1988 as well as from 1975 to 1978, and was Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations Office at Geneva from 1983 to 1985.

From 1980 to 1983, Mr. Turkmen was Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, was its Secretary-General in 1980 and was its High Counsellor from 1978 to 1979.

From 1979 to 1980, he was the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Thailand to liaise with the Thai Government on humanitarian questions. He has also been the Turkey's Ambassador to the Soviet Union and to Greece.

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The President of the General Assembly, Guido de Marco (Malta), yesterday ended a six-day visit to Israel and the occupied territories during which he toured refugee camps of the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan.

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At press conference in Amman, the President described the high state of tension in the occupied territories as "a powder keg" and urged implementation of United Nations resolutions calling for an international peace conference on the Middle East as a means to defuse it. He also called on United Nations Member countries to increase their financial support UNRWA, which provides education, health and social services to the refugees under increasingly difficult conditions.

Following a round-table discussion at the Royal Palace on the economic and humanitarian aspects of the crisis in the Gulf, chaired by Crown Prince Hassan, the President met for over an hour with Palestinian officials. They sounded themes raised in similar meetings with Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories -- namely, the need for international protection against excesses by the Israeli authorities. They also expressed concern over the wave of Soviet Jewish migration to Israel and frustration over the failure to implement United Nations resolutions on the questions of Palestine and the Middle East.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/802
9 January 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ General debate continues at Amendment Conference to Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in Atmosphere, Outer Space and under Water.

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The relationship between nuclear testing and the qualitative promotion of the nuclear-arms race was among matters discussed this morning as the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water --.also called the partial test-ban Treaty -- continued its general debate. The Conference was convened at the initiative of States parties seeking to convert the 1963 Treaty into a comprehensive test ban.

Participants considered such issues as the relationship between testing and non-proliferation, the gap between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, the effectiveness of current verification technologies and the possible use of on-site inspections and seismological surveillance.

Views were also expressed on the difference between a phased or immediate approach to a comprehensive ban, the possibility of a moratorium as an interim measure, the relative importance of multilateral and bilateral efforts and the question of the continuing relevance of current nuclear doctrines.

Speakers at yesterday afternoon's meeting said a comprehensive ban would serve as a barrier to nuclear proliferation, prevent the development of new generations of nuclear weapons and thus facilitate an end to the arms race. Speakers welcomed recent agreements reached between the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly regarding verification techniques for monitoring compliance with the partial test ban. Several participants rejected the view that nuclear weapons served as a deterrent to war among the major Powers. Some expressed the view that the extensive resources used to maintain nuclear-testing programmes could be put to more constructive use.

The Treaty, which does not cover underground tests, was signed on 5 August 1963 by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, and entered into force on 10 October the same year. By 1 November 1990, there were 117 parties to the Treaty. Two nuclear-weapon States -- China and France -- are among those that have not acceded to it.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/803
10 January 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General to travel to Baghdad to meet Iraqi President in search for peaceful solution to Gulf crisis.

- Speakers express varying views in general debate at Amendment Conference to Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in Atmosphere, Outer Space and under Water.

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East expresses regret at expulsion of four Palestinians from occupied Arab territories.

* * *

The Spokesman for Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar announced today that the Secretary-General will leave New York tonight on a mission to Baghdad to meet Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The Secretary-General will make a stop in Geneva tomorrow where he will meet with the 12 Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC). That meeting, said the Spokesman, had been requested by the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, in his capacity as President of the Community for January to July. The Secretary-General will also meet with the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, who is the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was still not known when the Secretary-General would leave Europe for Baghdad.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar will be accompanied by his Chef de Cabinet, Under-Secretary-General Virendra Dayal; Assistant Secretary-General Jean-Claude Aime, his chief adviser on the Middle East and Persian Gulf matters; the Assistant for Special Assignments, Giandomenico Picco; and other supporting staff.

The Spokesman reported that when asked this morning about how he intended to carry out his mission, the Secretary-General had said he hoped his moral authority would have some impact. He also said that in the event of a withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the United Nations would obviously have a role to play. The Secretary-General was referring to an idea proposed

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For information media—not an official record

to him last Monday by the Ambassadors of the five Nordic countries that a United Nations transition force go into Kuwait if Iraq was to withdraw.

It was further announced that the Secretary-General received this morning a telephone call from United States President George Bush who expressed support for his trip to Baghdad. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev also expressed support for the mission by a message brought to the Secretary-General this morning by the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations.

* * *

Technological advances now made possible the effective verification of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, according to views expressed this morning as the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water -- also called the partial test-ban Treaty -- continued its general debate.

Speakers stressed the need to end the vicious cycle of testing in order to modernize weapons and obtain military supremacy. They noted that a comprehensive ban would help end nuclear proliferation. Several speakers said the Amendment Conference should encourage negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban in the Conference on Disarmament; others said the Amendment Conference should continue its work towards achieving a ban. Many focused on the responsibility of the depositary Powers of the Treaty -- the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom -- to work towards a comprehensive ban.

In a statement this afternoon, the representative of the United States, Mary Elizabeth Hoinhes, said her country did not support the proposed amendment to the Treaty, for both substantive and procedural reasons.

While a comprehensive test ban was a long-term goal of the United States, she said, such a ban must be seen in the context of a time when there was no need to depend on nuclear deterrence to ensure international security and stability and when broad, deep and effectively verifiable arms reductions had been achieved.

The United States relied on a credible nuclear deterrent, she said. Nuclear testing was a critical link. So long as nuclear weapons played a critical role in national security, the United States needed a sensible testing programme. To use the amendment process to create a new and wholly different treaty would be unwise. To do so could jeopardize the continued viability of the existing Treaty.

* * *

Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) yesterday expressed deep regret that Israel carried out on 8 January the expulsion of four Palestinians from the occupied Arab territory.

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The deportations were carried out after lawyers for the defendants dropped their appeal on the grounds that they were not given enough information about the charges. The four men were then taken by Israeli army helicopter to southern Lebanon.

Mr. Giacomelli said the expulsions were not only in violation of international conventions but could also result in a heightening of tensions in the region.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/804
11 January 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Secretary-General, on his way to Baghdad, holds talks with President Mitterrand in Paris; EEC and Swiss Foreign Ministers, Non-Aligned Chairman in Geneva.

◆ Secretary-General, arriving in Amman, holds talks, over working dinner, with King Hussein, senior Jordanian officials.

◆ Elements involved in amendment of partial test-ban Treaty raised by speakers as Conference continues debate.

* * *

A United Nations official said today that Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and his party were en route from Geneva to Baghdad via Amman, Jordan. The Secretary-General had arrived in Geneva, today, on his way to Baghdad, following a short stopover in Paris during which he met for half an hour with President François Mitterrand of France.

During the meeting, which took place at the Elysee Palace, President Mitterrand pledged the full support of France for the mission of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General said he "enormously appreciated this support". They also discussed the situation in the Persian Gulf following the failure of the Geneva talks last Wednesday.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas accompanied the Secretary-General to the meeting and further discussions were held between them on the same topics.

The Secretary-General then flew to Geneva where he had brief talks on the Persian Gulf situation with the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, Rene Felber, at the airport. Later, for over an hour, he received pledges of support from the Foreign Ministers of the 12 States members of the European Economic Community (EEC). The meeting was presided over by Foreign Minister Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, current Chairman of the EEC, and the Secretary-General undertook to keep the 12 Governments informed of the results of his mission through Foreign Minister Poos.

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For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General then met with Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar of Yugoslavia in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Foreign Minister again expressed to the Secretary-General full support of the non-aligned States for his mission.

The official told correspondents that at press conferences today in Paris and Geneva, the Secretary-General said he felt "encouraged and moved" by the support he had received from many Heads of State -- of the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, France, the Nordic countries and the non-aligned countries. In his talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, he said he would be "the spokesman of the international community". The Secretary-General further stated that he considered it appropriate, in case of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, for the United Nations to set up a peace-keeping mechanism of observation of such withdrawal. If the parties were to agree on the withdrawal, he would propose to the Security Council the participation of a United Nations peace-keeping operation.

Addressing journalists at the Palais des Nations also today, Foreign Minister Poos of Luxembourg announced that the 12 EEC Foreign Ministers had held an "exceptional meeting at Geneva under exceptional circumstances". They had given the Secretary-General the full support of the Community and its 350 million people.

Mr. Poos said there was no difference whatsoever between the Community and the Secretary-General regarding the framework provided by the resolutions adopted by the Security Council calling upon Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and to comply fully with those resolutions. The EEC Ministers were ready, he said, to envisage the possibility of bringing in United Nations forces after such withdrawal.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar arrived in Amman this evening, according to a spokesman, on his way to Baghdad. He had talks over dinner with King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan and other senior Jordanian officials, including the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The working dinner lasted two hours. The Secretary-General is scheduled to leave Amman for Baghdad in the early afternoon tomorrow, 12 January.

* * *

The role of nuclear testing in the qualitative spiralling of the arms race was stressed by speakers this morning as the two-week Conference to expand the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive ban to include underground tests ended its first week of general debate.

Many speakers emphasized the link between a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It was asserted that the current state of technology now made possible the effective verification of such a comprehensive ban. It was also stated that such a ban would alleviate concerns about the environmental effects of continued testing.

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A comprehensive test ban would reduce the desire of near-nuclear States to "join the nuclear club", it was said. Stating that the major obstacles to such a ban -- limits to verification technology and basic East-West mistrust -- no longer existed, many speakers said the current international climate should make it possible to achieve a comprehensive ban as a first step towards a nuclear-free world.

Some speakers said the Conference should continue its work beyond the current session if necessary. It was also stated that work on the question should continue in the Conference on Disarmament, since it had the participation of the nuclear-weapon States. Some participants advocated a step-by-step approach to negotiating a comprehensive test ban as the most realistic approach. Several speakers called for channelling resources released from the pursuit of nuclear arms into addressing the problems of hunger, development and malnutrition.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/805
14 January 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General, returning to New York from Baghdad, says meeting with Saddam Hussein was "unsuccessful". To report to Security Council tonight about his mission to Iraq.

- Meeting convened by Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) in Geneva is presented plan of action for assistance to 1.5 million people leaving Iraq and Kuwait in case of outbreak of war.

- Seven countries pledge new contributions to Operation Salam, the United Nations emergency relief and rehabilitation programme for Afghanistan.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar returned to New York today, after talks on Sunday with President Saddam Hussein of Iraq concerning the Persian Gulf crisis, and characterized those talks as "polite but, unfortunately, unsuccessful". He is to report to the Security Council in consultations at 9 p.m. on the results of his peace mission.

The Secretary-General had gone to Baghdad in an effort to find a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis. The 15 January deadline set by the Security Council for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait expires at midnight tomorrow.

The Secretary-General told the press upon his arrival at Kennedy Airport today that he had not been offered anything from the Iraqi authorities which could be considered as a step towards peace. When asked if there was any hope left for peace, he said it was "a little late for embarking on any other efforts". Asked if he had lost hope, the Secretary-General replied, "In some ways, yes". He also said that President Hussein had not expressed any desire to withdraw from Kuwait, nor had the question of an international conference on the Palestinian question been specifically raised during the talks.

In Baghdad yesterday, 13 January, the Secretary-General held talks for three and a half hours with President Hussein and, before that and later, with Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and other senior Iraqi officials.

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For information media—not an official record

During his four-day trip, the Secretary-General held talks, on the Persian Gulf situation, with President François Mitterrand of France, on two occasions; Foreign Minister Rene Felber of Switzerland; the 12 Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC), led by Foreign Minister Jacques Poos of Luxembourg; Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar of Yugoslavia, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement; King Hassan of Jordan and senior Jordanian officials; former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

A United Nations official told correspondents today that upon his return to New York, the Secretary-General had immediately consulted with the President of the Security Council, who called for consultations this evening at 9 to hear the Secretary-General's report on his peace mission to Iraq.

The Secretary-General also spoke, by telephone, today with British Prime Minister John Major; with Foreign Minister Poos of Luxembourg; and with the Permanent Representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union.

* * *

A United Nations plan of action to take care of some 1.5 million people who are expected to leave Iraq and Kuwait in case of the outbreak of war was presented last Friday in Geneva at a meeting convened by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).

Present at the meeting were the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Humanitarian Assistance relating to the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait, Saddrudin Aga Khan; more than 70 Governments; United Nations organizations and agencies; intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The United States representative pledged $3 million for the planned activities.

The UNDRO said in a press release that it was impossible yet to predict which border points would be the safest route of escape or to know in advance the breakdown, by nationalities, of the displaced population. Therefore, a module for the four concerned countries -- Iran, Jordan, Syria and Turkey -- had been included in the contingency planning, to allow for the pre-positioning of relief supplies and to meet emergency requirements, in line with contingency measures taken by local authorities.

Speaking at the meeting, UNDRO Co-ordinator M'hamed Essaafi said the major concern of the neighbouring countries was to be sure they would receive immediate assistance from the international community so that they would not have to shoulder the burden alone when facing a sudden influx of people, were it displaced persons or refugees. "The example of Jordan, to whom the international community still owes about $40 million, was not an encouraging one", he added. Mr. Essaafi said $38 million, representing 25 per cent of the total amount required to assist 400,000 persons over a period of three months, were urgently needed. "We all wish that war can be avoided, but we must at the same time be ready to face the worst."

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Saddrudin Aga Khan emphasized that the plan was a perfect example of inter-agency co-ordination and that co-operation of all agencies concerned to produce this update to the plan had been carried out in an exemplary fashion. He expressed concern about how little attention had been paid to the humanitarian consequences of the political conflict.

D. Stafford, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, noted that 60 per cent of those who might leave Iraq and Kuwait would be refugees, that 12 officers of the agency had already left for the region and that an operations and communications centre had been set up at UNHCR headquarters. Seventeen flights, commissioned by the agency for three days starting from today, would position in the region basic shelter and relief supplies, to meet the needs of the first 50,000 persons.

Representatives of the affected and transit countries -- Bangladesh, Iran, Jordan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria and Viet Nam -- expressed their appreciation for the timely updating of the plan of action, emphasizing the need for a rapid and substantial contribution to cope with any further deterioration of the situation in the region.

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Seven countries -- the United States, Canada, Sweden, Australia, Finland, Germany and Italy -- have announced new contributions to Operation Salam, a programme of emergency relief and rehabilitation in Afghanistan being implemented throughout that country by United Nations agencies, volunteers and local and international non-governmental organizations.

These new contributions come at a time when the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations are engaged in efforts to help the Afghan people cope with the ongoing conflict and the devastation caused during the past decade. In addition, difficulties are now arising now from the exceptionally severe winter, particularly in the north of the country. Urgent efforts are being made to deliver essential food supplies and other relief goods to the affected areas.

United Nations assistance programmes of Operation Salam, which began in May 1988, cover rehabilitation of agriculture, food aid, health care, education and training, and mine clearance, among other things.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/806
15 January 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General urges Iraqi President Hussein to withdraw forces at once; says if process under way, Iraq and its forces would not be attacked.

- Speakers in Committee of Whole discuss verification and possible reconvening of Amendment Conference to partial test-ban Treaty at later date.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar this evening urged President Saddam Hussein to commence, without delay, the total withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In a statement to the press, he said that if such a commitment were made, and clear and substantial steps were taken to implement the Security Council e resolutions, a just peace, with all of its benefits, would follow.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar went on to say that as 15 January advanced, "the world stands poised between peace and war". He appealed to President Hussein "to turn the course of events away from catastrophe and towards a new era of justice and harmony based on the principles of the United Nations Charter". All efforts in that direction would fail, he said, unless Iraq could signify its readiness to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, beginning with resolution 660 (1990).

The Secretary-General stated that neither Iraq nor its forces would be attacked by those arrayed in the international coalition against Iraq, if those resolutions were complied with. This, he said, was based on understandings he had received from Governments at the highest level.

With the commencement of withdrawal, as Secretary-General of the United Nations he would, with the consent of the parties concerned, and the agreement of the Security Council, be prepared immediately to deploy United Nations observers and, if necessary, United Nations forces, to certify the withdrawal and to ensure that hostilities did not erupt on the ground. In addition, he declared, with Iraqi compliance of the resolutions, he would urge the Security

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Council to review its decisions imposing sanctions against Iraq, and encourage a process whereby foreign forces deployed in the area would be phased out.

Peace in the region, the Secretary-General continued, required that all of its problems be resolved justly and equitably, in accordance with the principles of the Charter. He had received assurance from the highest levels of government, that with the resolution of the present crisis, every effort would be made to address, in a comprehensive manner, the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian question.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said that, as he had stated to the Council last night, all were aware of the extreme gravity of the decisions to be made in the period ahead. No one and no nation could, he stated, resort to the other "necessary means" implied by resolution 678 (1990), knowing in advance that tragic and unpredictable consequences could follow.

The Secretary-General expressed hope that wisdom and statesmanship would prevail in all quarters, in order to avoid conflict. In appealing to President Saddam Hussein today, he wished to convey his readiness to work with him and all others concerned to this end.

Concluding, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said that, in the tenth and final year of his tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations, no cause would give him greater satisfaction than to set the Middle East as a whole on the road to just and lasting peace. He stated that no disappointment would be greater and more tragic than to find the nations of the world engaging in a conflict that none of their peoples wanted.

Members of the Security Council resumed private consultations today at noon in the search for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis before the expiration of the deadline set for midnight tonight. The Council met through the night last night, discussing various proposals to encourage Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

During those consultations, the Secretary-General presented to the Council a report on his peace mission to Baghdad. He told the press later that the Council had decided to keep the report confidential. The Secretary-General indicated that since his mission "had not given the results expected", members of the Council were "unanimous in desiring a peaceful solution to the present situation". He said Council members were prepared to continue their efforts all of today in order to avoid the war.

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The Committee of the Whole of the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water -- also called the partial test-ban Treaty -- continued this morning to consider a proposed amendment which would convert that Treaty into a comprehensive ban.

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Speakers addressed both verification issues and the question of whether the Amendment Conference should be reconvened at a later date. Several participants stressed that verification was a complex issue involving a global network to monitor seismic events and the release of radioisotopes, as well as the use of remotely sensed imagery and on-site inspections. While some said it was already possible to verify a comprehensive test ban, others maintained that additional technical work was needed.

Many of the participants suggested that the Amendment Conference should meet again to pursue the goal of a comprehensive test ban. Other speakers said the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was the proper forum for negotiating such a ban.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/807
16 January 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Chairman of Palestinian Rights Committee expresses "apprehension and deep concern" at possible tragic impact of war in Persian Gulf on Palestinians' safety and protection.

- Côte d'Ivoire requests meeting of Security Council to address deteriorating economic and social situation in Liberia.

- Member countries of the United Nations owe the Organization over $402 million in outstanding contributions from last year, according to latest status of contributions report.

- Director-General of World Health Organization calls on member States to increase their net contributions to proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 by approximately 21 per cent.

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The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), has called for the urgent attention of the Secretary-General to what she terms "the growing dangers faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem".

In a letter addressed to Mr. Perez de Cuellar, she expressed the Committee's "apprehension and deep concern" at the possible tragic impact of a war in the Gulf on for the Palestinians' safety and protection.

She referred to an urgent appeal of a non-governmental organization, the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre of the Arab Studies Society at Jerusalem, which stated that there were indications that a mass transfer of Palestinians could be carried out in the event of war.

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For information media—not an official record

She appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and all concerned to take immediately all necessary action to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

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Côte d'Ivoire has requested a meeting of the Security Council to address the deteriorating economic and social situation in Liberia.

In a letter, dated 15 January, to the Council President, the Chargé d'affaires of Côte d'Ivoire attached the text of a draft statement by the Council President. By the statement, the members of the Council would call upon the parties to the conflict in Liberia to continue to respect the cease-fire agreement which they signed and to co-operate fully with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore peace and normalcy in Liberia. The Council would also call upon the international community to actively support the peace process in Liberia and would welcome the resumption of United Nations relief assistance in Liberia following the acceptance of a general cease-fire.

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Member countries of the United Nations owe the Organization over $402 million in outstanding contributions from last year, according to the latest figure. The largest debtor continues to be the United States, with nearly $300 million overdue. Statistics also indicate that the number of countries that have paid their dues in full by the end of the year have decreased in the last three years, from 86 in 1988 to 67 last year.

The peace-keeping budget, which is separate, faces a shortfall of over $346 million from the past year.

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Addressing the eighty-seventh session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board in Geneva on Monday, its Director-General, Hiroshi Nakajima, said he was obliged to call on member States to increase their net contributions to the agency's working budget for the 1992-1993 programme by approximately 21 per cent.

The regular working budget amounted to some $764 million, which represented zero growth in real terms for the fifth consecutive biennium, he said. It was necessary to raise that amount because of unforseeable inflation and currency exchange rate fluctuations, and declines in available casual income.

Mr. Nakajima said he had endeavoured to continue to fulfil the mandate of the agency in pursuit of the goal of health for all, while taking into account the changing political, economic and social conditions of the 1990s.

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He stressed that the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 was a "transitional" one, which began to reflect the new strategies called for by the last decade. In many countries of the world, Mr. Nakajima said, the shift towards more market-oriented economies and pluralistic systems, and the greater focus on human rights, as well on social equity, meant that old ways of planning, organizing and financing health systems no longer provided a sufficiently reliable model. World-wide inflation and recession, including a decline in export commodity prices, had resulted in competition for limited financial resources, in which health was receiving a smaller and smaller share, the Director-General said.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/808
17 January 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses deep sorrow about onset of military confrontation last night in Persian Gulf; says hostilities come within framework of Security Council resolutions.

- Nine countries pledge some $55 million to UNDRO Plan of Action for refugees leaving Iraq and Kuwait.

- International Committee of the Red Cross reminds all parties to Gulf conflict of their commitments as signatories to 1949 Geneva Convention.

- Lebanon requests Security Council to extend mandate of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for further period of six months, until 31 July.

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Following the onset of military confrontation last night in the Persian Gulf, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the press an hour and a half after the first strikes that he was deeply saddened by the beginning of hostilities. But, he said, those hostilities came within the framework of the Security Council resolutions.

When asked this morning for his reactions to last night's events, he told correspondents that, "in view of the failure of diplomacy, we couldn't expect anything different". As to his role now that war had erupted, the Secretary-General said, "For the time being, I don't think that it's time for diplomacy at this very moment, which means that there's not much I can do."

When asked later today if he saw any prospect for peace any time soon, the Secretary-General replied, "It depends on Iraq, whether Iraq capitulates."

During consultations among Security Council members last night, three countries -- the United States, France and the United Kingdom -- informed the

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Council of ongoing developments in the Gulf. No decision was taken at those consultations, and the Secretary-General said this morning that no decision was expected.

The Secretary-General's Spokesman told correspondents at noon that Mr. Perez de Cuellar was meeting with the Ambassador of Iran, Kamal Kharrazi, who would bring to him a message from President Ali-Akbar Rafsanjani of Iran.

After that meeting, the Secretary-General was asked by correspondents if he had received indications from the Iranian representative that his country might step in as a mediator. The Secretary-General replied that Mr. Kharrazi had not mentioned anything which related to any mediation. The Secretary-General added that he thought it was "a little late for diplomacy".

Asked if hope for peace was forlorn at this moment, the Secretary-General replied that although it was unfortunate there was a war, he still hoped the Iraqis would withdraw from Kuwait.

* * *

At a Geneva meeting convened by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) to consider humanitarian assistance in connection with the Iraq-Kuwait crisis, nine countries announced pledges of some $55 million to the relief operation -- Japan, $38 million; Denmark, $6 million; Sweden and the United States, $3 million each; Norway and Switzerland, $1.5 million each; and Finland and the United Kingdom, $1 million each.

In a statement at the meeting, the UNDRO Co-ordinator, M'Hamed Essaafi, said information on the situation in the area had been received from emergency relief officials who had been sent to Iran, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. Inventories were being established of the likely needs of displaced persons, and co-operation from Governments of the four countries was encouraging.

In Iran, said the Co-ordinator, agency representatives wanted to ensure a co-ordinated United Nations input to the Government's response to the emergency. In Jordan, the capacity of transit camps would be expanded for up to 100,000 people. Present relief food stocks were sufficient for that number for up to three months. In Syria, an operational agreement had been signed between the Government and the United Nations on implementing a national plan of action. United Nations assistance in Jordan might be facilitated through Syrian ports, if required. Turkey, while welcoming the United Nations offer of help, wanted to see how the situation developed.

The Deputy United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, David Stafford, said that in the event of war, commercial transport to most of the region would be "uninsurable", and it would be necessary to rely on transport provided by donor Governments. Otherwise, he said, all relief supplies would be paralysed. The meeting, held on 15 January, was attended by representatives of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies.

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With the outbreak of war in the Persian Gulf, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reminded all the parties to the conflict of their commitments as signatories to the 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war.

In a communique issued today, the Red Cross said it was essential that the States involved honoured those commitments in a situation where there was "a good reason to fear" that the civilian population might suffer particular hardship.

It reminded the parties that the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, as well as atomic weapons, was prohibited under international humanitarian law. The Red Cross confirmed that it was ready to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it by the Geneva Conventions and by its statutes as well as that of the Red Crescent Movement, and reiterated that it was available to the parties as a neutral and independent intermediary.

* * *

The Government of Lebanon has asked the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months, until 31 July.

In a letter, dated 16 January, addressed to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, Khalil Makkawi, said the presence of UNIFIL continued to remain of utmost necessity to provide assistance and support for the civilian population faced with the violence and arbitrariness of Israeli occupation.

He said some major constructive developments had taken place in his country since the last renewal of the UNIFIL mandate. A government of national unity had been formed, representing all of the country's broad political movements, and the army had assumed complete control of the greater Beirut area.

Mr. Makkawi said it was Lebanon's expectation that the time had come for the Security Council not to tolerate any more the continuous occupation by Israel of Lebanese land and to demand the prompt implementation of the Council's resolutions. The UNIFIL mandate expires on 31 January.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/809
18 January 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses regret for Iraqi missile attack last night on Tel Aviv.

- Security Council President receives letters from members of military coalition informing him of Wednesday evening's attack against Iraq.

- United Nations agencies report of tens of thousands of refugees fleeing into Jordan as they continue to co-ordinate efforts to meet humanitarian needs of people affected by war in Persian Gulf.

- Amendment Conference concludes; authorizes its President to hold further consultations on a comprehensive test ban.

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Following the attack last night by Iraqi missiles on Tel Aviv, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar this morning expressed regret that the attacks were spreading the conflict, since Israel was not part of the coalition. The Secretary-General also deplored the fact that the targets were civilian.

Asked by correspondents, on his arrival at United Nations Headquarters, what his message to Israel would be, the Secretary-General replied that he expected Israel to be as patient as possible.

To a question about last night's attack on Saudi Arabia, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said that at least Saudia Arabia was part of the coalition; but as Secretary-General of the United Nations, he was not pleased to see hostilities around the world. He reiterated that the hostilities against Iraq came within the framework of the Security Council resolutions.

Asked if he still had contacts with the Iraqi authorities, the Secretary-General said he had not been in contact with the Iraqi Ambassador in the last two days. Neither had he been in contact with Israeli authorities.

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For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General's Spokesman announced at the noon briefing that the Ambassadors of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) had met, at their request, with the Secretary-General to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the Gulf crisis. They had also discussed the Nordic proposal to dispatch a peace-keeping force to Kuwait if Iraq withdraws from that country.

* * *

A United Nations official told correspondents at Headquarters today that the President of the Security Council, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, was holding bilateral meetings with Council members, although no formal session of the whole Council was envisaged for the time being. The subject of those bilateral meetings was a general exchange on the situation in the Persian Gulf.

The official said the President had asked members of the military coalition against Iraq to keep him and the Council informed and had received letters from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as from other countries participants in the coalition.

Among the letters made available as documents, one dated 17 January, from the French Ambassador, Pierre-Louis Blanc, said the military action on Wednesday evening had been initiated to fulfil commitments made jointly with France's allies to secure implementation of Security Council resolutions and had no other objective than that of liberating Kuwait.

In a similar letter, the British Ambassador, Sir David H.A. Hannay, said the military action initiated Wednesday by the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and France was designed to "achieve the liberation of Kuwait called for in the Security Council resolutions, and not the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq". He expressed hope that the actions would be concluded as soon as possible.

The Ambassador of Kuwait, Mohammad A. Abulhasan, informed the Council President in his letter that Kuwait was exercising its right to self-defence and to the restoration of its rights. Among those were, first and foremost, the recovery of Kuwaiti territories, occupied by Iraq since 2 August last year.

In other communications, the Soviet Union has informed the United Nations of its last-minute efforts to avert hostilities in the Gulf. In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, the Soviet Ambassador referred to a statement by President Mikhail Gorbachev who said that after being informed by the United States Administration of its decision to begin military operations, he had proposed that President George Bush should contact Saddam Hussein directly, about the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The Soviet Ambassador in Baghdad had been instructed to advise the Iraqi President of that proposal. In a television statement, President Gorbachev had expressed the hope that, guided by the higher interests of his people and of the world community, Saddam Hussein would take that path as the only way out.

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United Nations agencies are continuing to co-ordinate efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of people affected by the war in the Gulf.

A United Nations official said in Geneva today that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) had reported that an influx of tens of thousands of people had started to come into Jordan.

In addition, UNDRO reported of a massive displacement of people within Turkey, who were moving away from the border with Iraq to the centre of the country. No influx of people into Syria had been reported. There were reports of Iraqis fleeing into Iran on the north and eastern border to avoid the battlefield. UNDRO relief officials stressed that the situation was in such a state of flux, that the numbers were changing rapidly. The agency has prepared an emergency Plan of Action to assist those fleeing into the four countries neighbouring Iraq and Kuwait.

In a related development, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that requests for assistance for evacuees crossing into Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Iran have now increased. The agency has actively provided health assistance to those four countries since the beginning of the Gulf crisis and the first influx of evacuees.

In a communique issued at WHO headquarters, the agency estimated that the overall start-up costs of dealing with the health problems of the increasing number of evacuees would amount to some $2.4 million.

The agency further reported that a task force to monitor and assess the situation as it develops in the Gulf had been set up by its Director-General, Hiroshi Nakajima. The force consisted of WHO experts on chemical safety and toxicology, sanitation and water supply and transmittable diseases, among other things.

All relief efforts, the agency said, were carried out in close collaboration with UNDRO.

* * *

The Amendment Conference on the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water -- also known as the partial test-ban Treaty -- concluded its work tonight by adopting a decision mandating its President to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress towards a comprehensive test ban and to resuming the work of the Conference at "an appropriate time". The vote on the decision was 74 in favour to 2 against (United Kingdom, United States), with 19 abstentions.

In its decision, the Conference said it acknowledged the "complex and complicated nature of certain aspects of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, especially those with regard to verification of compliance and possible sanctions against non-compliance."

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/810
21 January 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council to take up situation in Liberia tomorrow.

+ President of Security Council receives further letters from members of military coalition against Iraq.

+ Security Council President informs Iraqi Ambassador of various consultations held with Council members.

+ International relief agencies continue to prepare for an estimated million and a half evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait.

* * *

A United Nations official said today that the Security Council President, Bagbeni A. Nzengeya (Zaire), was holding bilateral consultations with a representative of the United States. The Council President was also expected to receive the Ecuadorian Ambassador in his capacity as Co-ordinator of the Non-Aligned Caucus in the Council.

The official said the President had indicated that, in addition to the question of the Persian Gulf, he was also discussing the question of consultations on the situation in Liberia. Subjects to be covered would include the possibility of Council support for the transitional Government in Liberia and humanitarian assistance to that country.

It was later announced that the Council would hold consultations on Liberia at 11 a.m. tomorrow, to be followed by a formal meeting.

Among the letters addressed to the Council President and made available as documents today, one from United States Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering stated that his country strongly preferred a peaceful resolution of the Gulf crisis, but that Saddam Hussein had rejected all diplomatic efforts and had continued to defy the will of the Security Council and the community of nations.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The letter stated that the purpose of the military actions was the liberation of Kuwait, not the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq. The actions were directed strictly at military and strategic targets and every effort had been made to minimize civilian casualties. The United States hoped the actions would be concluded as soon as possible consistent with the full implementation of Security Council resolutions and the restoration of international peace and security in the area.

A similar letter from the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Samir S. Shihabi, stated that the military operations for the liberation of Kuwait had commenced on 16 January because Saddam Hussein had rejected all efforts, appeals and endeavours and had also rejected international law calling for his withdrawal from Kuwait.

A letter from the Ambassador of Yugoslavia, Darko Silovic, the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, stated that all sides involved in the Gulf crisis should reflect once again upon the "enormous dangers" of a war and its "disastrous consequences". Yugoslavia appealed to the Iraqi President to act in favour of peace, in the interest of Iraq and the Iraqi people. The letter said Yugoslavia fully supported the Secretary-General's recent statement and his efforts for peace.

* * *

The President of the Security Council, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire), has informed Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari of various consultations he has had with Council members and also of various ideas put forward to contribute to a solution of the Persian Gulf crisis.

At a meeting on Saturday, the Council President mentioned to Ambassador Al-Anbari separate proposals by Algeria, India and the Soviet Union. The Iraqi Ambassador undertook to convey those ideas to his Government in Baghdad although he stressed the difficulty he had communicating with his capital.

The Council President continued his consultations on Saturday, in particular with the spokesman for the Non-Aligned Group, Ambassador Jose Ayala Lasso of Ecuador.

On Friday afternoon, the Council President told correspondents that he deplored the Iraqi missile attack Thursday night on Israel. Israel was not concerned in the war and should not be attacked by Iraq, he said.

The Council President expressed surprise that Iraq had attacked Israel, well knowing that all the allied forces in the Gulf were now implementing the 12 Council resolutions on Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Israel was not involved in the Gulf crisis and had, since the start of the crisis, kept a low profile.

Asked about a proposal by Algeria for mediation, he said the Council was still exploring with Algeria "all means and ways to accelerate" the peace process in the region. He said the Council was discussing ways to convince

Saddam Hussein -- in spite of the war -- to give up and withdraw his forces from Kuwait.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the press Friday night that a Soviet peace initiative, sent in a message by President Mikhail Gorbachev to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, had not been sent through the United Nations.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said that, only if the Soviet approach to Iraq was successful, would the Organization be involved. He added that, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, he would like to see peace as soon as possible.

Asked about his consultations with the five permanent Council members on Friday, the Secretary-General replied that he had met with four of them separately to discuss the Gulf situation. Mr. Perez de Cuellar indicated that other subjects had also been on the agenda for discussion.

* * *

International relief agencies continue to prepare for an estimated million and a half evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait.

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) said in its latest situation report that supplies had been sent to Egypt, and that agreement had been reached with the Jordanian Government for transit camps to be set up in Jordan to assist 100,000 people fleeing from the war. The Jordanian Government confirmed that the border would remain open, as would the airport, despite the fact that international airlines have suspended flights to the country. According to UNDRO, the World Food Programme has food stocks in the country to cover the needs of 450,000 people for one month.

The Disaster Relief Office further said plans were under way for transit camps for about 35,000 people in Syria to be equipped by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The UNDRO also reported that the Iraqi Government continued to keep the border with Turkey closed, and that there was no reliable information on evacuees wishing to cross from Iraq into that country.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/811
22 January 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council urges parties to conflict in Liberia to continue to respect cease-fire, co-operate with ECOWAS; appeals for humanitarian assistance.

+ Secretary-General renews appeal for withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait to prevent further escalation of death and destruction,

+ Secretary-General is "extremely concerned" about condition of allied pilots captured by Iraqi forces, saying "it goes against Geneva Conventions ... in a very clear manner".

+ UNRWA expresses concern about insufficient protective measures for Palestinians in occupied territories in event of chemical weapons attack.

+ UNICEF releases $2 million from its Emergency Reserve Fund to assist countries preparing for influx of people fleeing from Gulf war; dispatches medical supplies, tents and blankets to Amman.

+ Conference on Disarmament opens 1991 session, hearing message from Secretary-General and statement by Conference President.

* * *

The Security Council this afternoon called on the parties to the conflict in Liberia to continue to respect the cease-fire agreement and to co-operate fully with the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore peace and normalcy in Liberia. The Council also supported the appeal launched by ECOWAS for increased humanitarian assistance to the people of Liberia.

The Council, through a statement read out by its President, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire), at a formal meeting following consultations on the situation in Liberia, commended the efforts of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to promote peace and normalcy in Liberia. It also expressed appreciation to the Member States, the Secretary-General and humanitarian organizations for the humanitarian assistance to Liberia, and

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For information media—not an official record

called for additional assistance. The Council welcomed the resumption of the United Nations emergency programme in Liberia following the acceptance of a general cease-fire.

In a statement to the Council, the representative of Liberia, William Bull, said it was imperative to review and perhaps amend the Charter provision concerning non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, as that provision had hindered the Council from exercising its moral obligation and authority. Earlier efforts to have the Council consider the situation in Liberia had not been approved. Only now, following the loss of thousands of lives and great destruction, was the Council meeting to address that situation.

Full implementation of the ECOWAS peace plan could lead to a durable peace, if all parties to the conflict would hold the interests of the people paramount, he said. He also called attention to the need to address the deteriorating economic and social conditions in Liberia.

The representative of Nigeria, Ibrahim A. Gambari, said this was not the time to revisit the events that had led to the war in Liberia or to apportion blame. The leaders of ECOWAS had decided not to take sides but to reconcile the opposing parties, to restore peace and to establish a peace plan. The Security Council should urge the parties in Liberia to continue to respect the cease-fire. He called on the international community to contribute not only humanitarian support but also financial and logistical support to the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) so that it could complete its mission in Liberia successfully.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said today through his spokesman that he had witnessed with "profound grief and anxiety the increasing severity of the war and the widening of the area of hostilities" in the Persian Gulf. To prevent the toll in death and destruction escalating any further and the suffering of the peoples in the region from growing even worse, the Secretary-General appealed most sincerely to the Iraqi authorities to respond positively to his appeal of 15 January, so that efforts might be resumed to find a peaceful solution to "this grave and tragic conflict". The statement said the Secretary-General was in touch with the main humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with a view towards ensuring that humanitarian help was provided to those afflicted by this conflict as promptly as circumstances permitted.

Responding to correspondents' questions at the noon briefing, the Spokesman said the Secretary-General had been in touch with the President of the Red Cross this morning and also with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for humanitarian aspects relating to the situation in the Gulf, Prince Sadruddin Aga Kahn; and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), M'Hamed Essaafi.

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On his arrival at Headquarters this morning, the Secretary-General told correspondents that he was "extremely concerned" about the condition of the allied pilots captured by Iraqi forces, because it was something that went against the Geneva Conventions "in a very clear manner". It was a practice that could not be supported at the United Nations.

Asked by a correspondent about reported proposals that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq be brought to trial for war crimes, and whether there might be a role for the United Nations in such a situation, the Secretary-General replied: "If the United Nations is asked to do something, we are always ready to co-operate with any effort, but I haven't heard anything about that particular question."

Questioned about recent cease-fire proposals, the Secretary-General said some Member countries were working on proposals for a pause in hostilities. He emphasized, however, that there must first be an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

The Secretary-General told correspondents this afternoon that he deeply regretted today's attack on Tel Aviv by Iraq. There was no justification for such an attack, he said and expressed the hope that all parties would show restraint in order to avoid a worsening of the situation.

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The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Giorgio Giacomelli, has expressed concern to the Israeli Government that sufficient measures have not been taken to protect the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied territory against the possibility of a chemical weapons attack.

Mr. Giacomelli noted in Vienna today that the Israeli authorities have not taken the same steps to protect the more than 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for whose welfare they are responsible, as they have for the Israeli population as a whole. "Such steps would include the distribution of masks and other protective gear against chemical attacks, as well as the installation of adequate warning devices, such as air raid sirens", he said.

The Commissioner-General observed that UNRWA has repeatedly approached the Israeli authorities on this matter in recent months and received assurances that gasmasks and protective gear would be distributed to the Palestinian population at large. However, to date, only a fraction of the Palestinians in the West Bank and all those in Jerusalem have received masks.

While calling for the issuance of protective gear for the entire Palestinian population in the occupied territory, the Agency has approached

several Governments for assistance in supplying gas masks for essential UNRWA personnel. The first response has come from the Swedish Government, which has provided 25,000 gas-mask kits. These are to be distributed selectively by UNRWA, starting with personnel in public and health services, including hospital and clinic staff, in the West Bank and Gaza.

Mr. Giacomelli expressed his great appreciation to the Swedish Government for its prompt and generous response to the Agency's appeal.

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today dispatched medical supplies, tents and blankets to Amman and released $2 million from its Emergency Reserve Fund to assist countries preparing for possible large influxes of people fleeing the Gulf war.

In a press release issued today, UNICEF said it was working with the Governments in four countries -- Jordan, Syria, Iran and Turkey -- to establish camps to shelter thousands of people that might be displaced by the fighting. It was also working with local authorities to establish two new tented camps in Jordan. Ruweishid, with a capacity of 10,000, and Azraq-3, which can accommodate 30,000, will be ready to receive displaced people within the next two weeks. With five existing camps, Jordan will be able to receive 110,000 displaced people.

More than 1 millon people, most of them transient foreign workers, crossed into Jordan from Iraq and Kuwait shortly after the crisis erupted in August last year.

According to UNICEF, the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) has launched a special appeal for $175 million on behalf of the United Nations for the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action relating to the war in the Gulf.

* * *

The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament, this morning began its 1991 session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, the first part of which will last approximately 10 weeks.

In a message to the Conference, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar observed that the Conference was beginning its 1991 session under the shadow of war. The Persian Gulf crisis was a poignant reminder of the truth that peace and stability in international relations rested on full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter. That was the indispensable condition for a stable international security order within which progress in arms limitation and disarmament had to proceed hand in hand. It was, he said, ironic that the current situation, with its grave portents, should confront the Conference when a phenomenal positive change had taken place at a global level.

In the present evolving situation, stated the Secretary-General, the role of the Conference on Disarmament, as a single multilateral negotiating body, became even greater, and the successful discharge of its responsibilities was needed more than before. Nuclear disarmament remained, as it had to, a priority issue. Another priority was the completion of negotiations on a comprehensive chemical weapons convention.

In an opening statement, the Conference President, W. Rasaputram (Sri Lanka), said consultations were well advanced on organizational matters on which consensus was needed so that the Conference might soon begin its substantive work. Those questions related to the agenda; the programme of work in the light of the agreements reached last year on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference; and the establishment of subsidiary bodies on various agenda items. He hoped agreement could be reached at the next plenary meeting on a number of those subjects.

In a related development, Carl-Magnus Hyltenius (Sweden), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, a subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament, briefed the press today in Geneva on the status of the negotiations under way on the draft convention on chemical weapons. He said existing international instruments, notably the Geneva Protocols on chemical weapons, had definite weaknesses because they did not prohibit use of chemical weapons, and the draft convention was seeking to address that weakness.

Asked whether the Gulf war represented a setback or impetus, Mr. Hyltenius said it certainly illustrated the urgency of the need to promote the conclusion of the convention. The problem of chemical weapons was not a theoretical one for the people in the Middle East living with this threat. Specific sanctions in case of a breach would have to be decided upon by the executive council to be set up under the chemical weapons convention.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/812
23 January 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Union of Arab Maghreb -- Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia -- requests urgent Security Council meeting to examine "grave situation in Gulf region".

+ Secretary-General is informed by Iraqi Ambassador that 40 civilians have been killed and 180 wounded during first week of air strikes in Iraq.

+ United States calls on Iraq to respect international laws on armed conflict, including Geneva Conventions on protection of victims of war, The Hague Conventions on conduct of hostilities on land and at sea, and 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting use of chemical or biological weapons.

+ Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur in Geneva appeals for respect for civilian life in Gulf conflict.

+ Thirteen countries announce pledges to Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes to support $58.2 million budget of United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) for 1991.

* * *

The five North African States of the Union of Arab Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) have requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council "to examine the grave situation in the Gulf region".

The request was made today in a letter addressed to the President of the Council, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire).

The Council has not met in formal session on this subject since the beginning of the hostilities in the Gulf.

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The United Nations has been informed by the Permanent Rèpresentative of Iraq, Abdul Amir Al-Anbari, that a total of 40 civilians have been killed and 180 wounded in Iraq during the first week of air strikes. The letter, dated

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For information media—not an official record

22 January, also reported of the killing of one person and the wounding of 11 others in Kuwait.

The Iraqi Ambassador said the air bombardment and missiles launched by the United States and its "so-called allies" against urban centres in Iraq had resulted in civilian casualties and damage to a large number of Iraqi cities and urban centres. The letter listed 10 Iraqi provinces said to have suffered damage.

* * *

The Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Thomas R. Pickering, has called upon the Government of Iraq to respect its obligations under the international laws of armed conflict, including the Geneva Conventions on protection of victims of war, The Hague Conventions on the conduct of hostilities on land and at sea, and the 1925 Geneva Protocol not to use chemical or biological weapons.

In a letter, dated 21 January, addressed to the President of the Security Council in which the United States protested Iraq's announced intention to hold prisoners of war as hostage or to use them as human shields, Mr. Pickering said Iraqi prisoners of war would not be mistreated by the United States and would be provided humane and safe detention and medical care.

Ambassador Pickering said his country expected Iraq to provide the same treatment to members of the United States and other coalition armed forces captured by Iraq, in accordance with Iraq's obligations under the Geneva Conventions. Mr. Pickering remind the Government of Iraq that under international law, violations of the Geneva Conventions, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 or related international laws of armed conflict are war crimes and that individuals guilty of such violations may be subject to prosecution at any time, without any statute of limitations. This included members of the Iraqi armed forces and civilian government officials.

* * *

The Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on summary or arbitrary executions, S. Amos Wako, made an appeal in Geneva yesterday for the respect for civilian life in connection with the hostilities in the Gulf.

Mr. Wako stated that his mandate reflected the importance attached by the international community to the protection of the most fundamental of all human rights -- the right to life. It was in situations of armed conflict and hostilities such as the one now existing in the Gulf region that even greater care must be taken to ensure that the violation of the right to life was minimized, the Special Rapporteur said. He therefore strongly appealed to all the parties to adhere to the letter and spirit of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocols.

He urged the parties to ensure in their military strategies and policies that the right to life of the civilian population and those persons not taking part in the hostilities was respected. The right to life of the prisoners of

war should not be violated or endangered, he said, and they should not be exposed to danger or violence or intimidation. Further, the right to life of the wounded and the sick should be protected by giving proper medical care and attention.

* * *

Thirteen countries have announced pledges to support the $58.2 million budget for international humanitarian assistance programmes for Cambodian refugees for 1991.

Among the agencies supporting such assistance are the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). At a meeting yesterday at Headquarters, donors heard an appraisal of the situation by representatives of those agencies.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, S.A.M.S. Kibria, said that for the first time in the history of the border relief operation, UNBRO did not have sufficient pledges to cover basic food needs. Efforts were being offset by the large number of internally displaced persons, which numbered more than 130,000.

The Director of UNBRO, Alan Doss, said in that recent weeks there had been a huge influx of new arrivals in the camps. The operation was concerned about the presence of armed elements in the camps and the traffic in weapons and ammunition. An upsurge in banditry in the areas surrounding the camps had also caused many security problems.

The representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Fred Isler, expressed concern over how the repatriation of the 300,000 refugees on the Thai-Cambodia border would actually take place. He said all three resistance factions there had plans that differed substantially from those of the United Nations and its agencies. In his view, repatriation of the border population should take place only after a political settlement had been reached and after that settlement had led to the termination of hostilities in Cambodia.

D. Bayandor, the UNHCR representative, said a mixed pattern of return could be expected following the conclusion of a peace settlement. He urged co-operation to ensure that a return to malaria-prone and mine-infested areas could be averted.

The WFP representative, John Powell, said the overall food shortage for this year would be three times that for 1990, due to late and erratic rain and continued hostilities. Solutions had to be found if the level of food aid to be distributed in 1991 were to reach even minimal levels.

Ingar Bruggemann, of WHO, said recent political developments had enabled his organization to expand its participation in humanitarian efforts in Cambodia and to consider re-establishing a presence within the country.

The next donors' meeting will be held in April, in Bangkok, and the third in September, in New York.

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